

Coventry Village News

The Newsletter of Coventry Neighbors, Inc.
July 2002

FROM THE PRESENT'S PEN

About fifteen years ago, while living on South Taylor Road, my wife and I noticed a real estate ad offering a Rockefeller home for sale. We toured the open house and fell in love with the exciting architecture and the intriguing history surrounding the 81 French Tudor residences clustered in an a portion of Forest Hill. After long hours of talk and contemplation, we decided not to pursue the home. Three years later, we admitted what we intuitively knew. The little "starter" bungalow on Taylor was too small for us. The moving company agent agreed, saying we had seven rooms packed into a five-room structure. We decided upon this house in Coventry and moved in. For six years, we planned, sketched and argued as we systematically rebuilt the house into its current configuration. We liked to tell everyone that we turned the house upside-down, shook it out and then began a process of putting all of the pieces back together. All the while, the photo from the original Rockefeller real estate ad turned a deeper brown as it sat in a pencil box in my desk.

Our interest in the "Rockefellers" continued to grow. As additional versions came on the market, we would go to the open house and marvel at their integrity. After each visit, we considered them but realized the four-bedroom variety was too small. They would not fit our lifestyle or our needs. Because there are only a few five-bedroom models, we assumed we would never own one.

A couple years ago, we started to think about rehabilitation of another house. CVN readers may remember our pursuit of the "house on East 89th". We also consider "dumps" in Ohio City, Tremont and West Clinton. We looked into Lakewood and Euclid, but nothing ever aroused us. Last year, we called our longtime Real Estate agent, Jill Katzenberg (we bought the second house she sold in her career and our post cards to her from various vacations were featured in her advertising campaign.) We told her to keep her eyes open for mistreated homes in good areas and, "If a five bedroom Rockefeller ever comes on the market, we want to see it 'yesterday'!"

Last week, we scheduled our "Cleveland Heights" vacation. That meant, days at Cumberland pool, entertainment at Cain Park, the Centrum and the Cedar-Lee and meals at Sun-Luck Garden, Tandoor Café and Soul Vegetarian Central. The scheduled peace was disturbed early Monday morning. Jill called. It was "yesterday" and a five-bedroom Rockefeller was on the market. We looked, we liked, we made an offer, they accepted. Finding the home we've pined after for fifteen years meant that we would no longer be Coventry Neighbors. Bittersweet. My tenure as President must soon come to an end.

I have served as President of Coventry Neighbors for over five years. In that time, I tried to do what I could to make Coventry the best neighborhood in Cleveland Heights. I am most proud that Coventry Neighbors was able to keep the vision of a rehabilitated gateway to our neighborhood alive. Because we are a small, under-funded organization, we were never able to muster enough support to turn the plot of land in front of the Coventry Library into something "special". When the grant money became a possibility, Coventry Neighbors agreed that it would be better if the Coventry PEACE group were the requestors. Their superior leadership and membership was able to do what we couldn't. Shortly thereafter, Peggy Spath entered the picture and began a brilliant plan to add art to Coventry's center. The Coventry Arch is a striking symbol of the coexistence of people and a welcome to our neighborhood.

Ultimately, I believe my time as President was a failure. When elected, I told you I wanted most to increase membership. After trying a number of different approaches, it was clear that they were not working. Our membership is now at an all-time low. I have failed, because I was never able to convince the residents in our neighborhood that Coventry Neighbors was a vital organization. It did not help their daily life. They could not understand the value. I will also regret this.

My wife insists that it is not my fault. She believes lives have become much too busy to allow time for community meetings, unless there is a crisis or

unless there is a tangible benefit (street party, traveling dinner party, etc.) If given a choice between the PTA meeting and Coventry Neighbors, folks in the neighborhood with children will always choose their kids. That is perhaps the reason why our most loyal members do not yet have children, don't want them (like us) or have grown children. Deep down, I hope she's right. It makes my failure more palatable.

Before I disappear, I will do everything I can to assist in determining the future of the organization. I will not abandon the neighborhood or the neighbors. There are also people I need to recognize.

- Bonnie Caplan has been one of the most ardent supporters of Coventry Neighbors (as she is with the entire city). She represents the paragon of what a city council person should be, informed, curious, aggressive and friendly. Without her constant guidance and consistent support, I would have abandoned this position years ago. Thank you. I can only imagine what an entire council made up of you could achieve for our city.
- Bob Klemenc has been Treasurer of Coventry Neighbors longer than I have served as President. It's a job I could not have done. I am relieved that he never decided to quit. Thanks.
- Sandy Jaffe has taken my scribbling and turned them into the newsletter you see before you each month. You wouldn't have a Coventry Village News without her. Thanks.
- Bruce Biddle produces our newsletter and distributes them to local vendors and to members for circulation. You wouldn't receive your newsletter without his efforts. Thanks.
- Dan and Laura Dempsey have been very active members. Whenever a task arises, they are the first to volunteer to help. Thanks.
- Dave Reisser is a new "Neighbor" that actively participates in the meeting's discussions. New thoughts and ideas are always refreshing. Thanks.
- Julie Alandt is our city's neighborhood contact for Coventry. She religiously attends each meeting and provides us with information from the city. When events that affect our neighborhood crop-up, she calls to inform me. She has also been extremely patient while fielding complaints. She exemplifies "city service". Thanks.

To everyone else who has interacted with me during this experience, thank you. I only hope we could have done more.

While I may be moving, I'm not leaving Cleveland Heights. We found one of the few "Rockefellers" outside of East Cleveland. I still believe this city has the wherewithal to move mountains. I want to remain part of it until retirement sends us to an island in the Caribbean.

Good-bye. It has been my pleasure.

Jeffrey R. Dross – President, Coventry Neighbors

FARMERS MARKET COMING TO COVENTRY

On Thursday July 11th from 2:00PM to 6:00PM The North Union Farmers Market will set-up shop in the city parking lot between Medic Drugstore and Heights Cleaners & Laundry on Coventry Road. For eight weeks farm fresh goods will be available for purchase directly from the growers. Some local artists also offering their creations for sale will join them. As a special treat, the chef from local restaurant, Sal & Angelo's will give cooking demonstrations on the use of fresh vegetables. Musical entertainment will be provided.

The North Union Farmers Market is a non-profit organization with a mission to promote fresh goods to urban areas and to educate people about good foodstuffs. They have been a tremendous success in Shaker Square for the last eight years. They have also been offering fresh produce to residents in Lakewood for four years and Olmsted Falls for two. The group consists of farmers from Northeast Ohio (Geauga, Lake and Ashtabula County).

Why not come down and for eight weeks, serve something for dinner that does not come out of plastic! For additional information, call Danita Anderson at 751-3712.

COVENTRY PHOTOGRAPHER EXHIBITS IN CITY HALL

Middlehurst resident, Roy Woda retired from teaching and re-ignited his passion for photography. His interest in people and place and the influence of Henri Cartier-Bressor naturally led him to the Annual Somerton Road 4th of July Parade. Since 1964,

Somerton residents have marched in the annual parade. Mr. Woda has captured the friendship, community life and spirit of this yearly event in a series of Black & White photographs. They will be on display in the City Hall atrium from July 1, 2002 through August 30, 2002. City Hall is open from 8:00PM to 5:30PM, Monday through Friday. Stop by to see the work of one Coventry Neighbor capturing the joy of other Coventry Neighbors.

NO MEETING IN JULY!

Remember, there will be no meeting held in July. People are away, summer is in full bloom and lots of things are happening. Join us again in October, when our normal meeting schedule resumes. Have fun in the sun!

THE FUTURE OF COVENTRY NEIGHBORS

Those of you interested in joining a conversation on the future of Coventry Neighbors after the departure of Jeff Dross, please call Jeff at 321-0206 or write and e-mail to ladrossceur@core.com. We will decide the best way to plan for our future.

2002 CAIN PARK SEASON COVENTRY MAGIC BUS! SCHEDULE

18 Sunday 8:30pm Dennis Quaid & The Sharks

The Coventry Magic Bus has returned! The big green bus will transport concert/show patrons from Severance Town Center and Coventry Road to and from Cain Park on selected evenings. The shuttle will pick-up visitors in front of Borders Books at Severance and in front of the Coventry Parking Garage starting one-hour prior the beginning of the event, and for one hour following the conclusion of the Cain Park event.

For more information, contact Cain Park at 216.371.3000

Route time is approximately 15 minutes. Ongoing construction on Lee Road this summer may cause some slight delays due to routing changes. Any changes in the Coventry pick-up point due to routing changes (construction on Lee Road can affect this) will be prominently posted.

July

2	Tuesday	7:30pm Ball in the House
17	Wednesday	7:30pm Saline Fiddlers Philharmonic
18	Thursday	7:30pm Bruce Hornsby
19	Friday	7:30pm Josh White Jr.
20	Saturday	8:30pm Livingston Taylor
21	Sunday 7:00pm	Workman's Circle Yiddish Concert
24	Wednesday	8:30pm In.let Dance Theatre
25	Thursday	8:30pm An Evening with Pierce Pettis and The Waifs
27	Friday	8:30pm Sean Curran Company - Dance
30	Tuesday	7:30pm US Air Force Band of Flight
31	Wednesday	8:30pm The Glenn Miller Orchestra

August

2	Friday	8:30pm Dianne Reeves
6	Tuesday	8:30pm Bela Fleck and the Flecktones
8	Thursday	8:00pm Keb' Mo.
9	Friday	8:00pm Isaac Hayes
10	Saturday	8:30pm Chicago Sitcom/Lynn Trefzger
11	Sunday 8:30pm	Cleveland Jazz Orchestra
13	Tuesday	8:30pm Marcia Ball & The Dirty Dozen Brass Band
15	Thursday	8:30pm Pointe of Departure
17	Saturday	8:30pm Los Angeles Guitar Quartet

PARTY IN THE HEIGHTS - PARTY IN COVENTRY

July 2	Clearfork (bluegrass)
July 9	Dance Afrika Dance
July 16	Harmony Girls (folk)
July 23	Aikido demonstration with Laura Santuro & Greg Evans, comedian with Charlie Mosbrook (folk)
July 30	Dahveed Nelson (performance poetry)
August 6	ACO (rock)
August 13	"A Passage to India" Indian dancing, henna painting and traditional crafts
August 20	Blue Lunch (swing)

It's summer! Time to sit on the lawn and enjoy the outdoors with your friends. The Heights Arts Collaborative is making this summer pleasure even better by presenting a series of free musical events Under the Coventry Arch at Coventry Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard each Tuesdays Evening, June 18th through August 20th from 7-9:30PM. Come every week, tell your friends and remember, it'll be cold and snowy soon. Enjoy his pleasure while you can.

If the Coventry concerts are not enough, a series of musical events will be held through the summer in the Cedar-Lee area, the Cedar Hill area and the Heights Garden Center on Cedar Road. Call the Heights Art Collaborative at 371-3344 for additional information.